



**Antelope Valley Mosquito
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NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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West Nile Virus Reappears in the Antelope Valley

Lancaster, CA – The Antelope Valley Mosquito & Vector Control District (AVMVCD) has received confirmation from the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) that a dead mockingbird has tested positive for West Nile Virus (WNV).

This is the first sign of WNV in the Antelope Valley this year. A watchful resident spotted the bird near Avenue K and Challenger Way in Lancaster reported it to the dead bird hotline. “There has been a substantial increase in West Nile Virus throughout the State in the last month,” says District Manager Cei Kratz. “The San Gabriel Valley Mosquito and Vector Control District announced yesterday that they’ve been seeing large clusters of dead birds in some areas within their District, which usually predicts an increased WNV activity by several weeks.”

Throughout California 23 Counties show WNV activity in 332 dead birds, 86 mosquito samples, 4 chickens, 1 horse and 1 squirrel. So far three people have tested positive for WNV, one in Tulare County and two in Stanislaus County. To date, 20 mosquito samples, 59 dead birds, and 2 chickens have been confirmed positive for the virus in Los Angeles County.

“Our main concerns are still unkempt pools, especially at vacant houses,” said District Manager Cei Kratz. “We receive information daily about pools from Code Enforcement, Department of Health, concerned citizens and our own technicians who notice a suspicious house while driving.”

Residents are urged to clean or drain their pools, before the Vector Control Technicians pay them a visit, since it poses a Public Health threat and could also get expensive. If the home owner does not

take any action, the AVMVCD is empowered by the California Health and Safety Code to fine them up to \$1,000 per day until the problem is fixed.

West Nile Virus is transmitted by the bite of an infected mosquito. Although most people that are infected do not show any symptoms, West Nile Virus is a potentially debilitating disease. District officials urge residents to take individual responsibility for the protection of their families and animals. Here are a few easy suggestions to reduce mosquitoes in your yard and your neighborhood:

- * Get rid of standing water – Empty out all small containers at least once a week, keep pools and spas chlorinated or drained, and repair all water leaks.
- * Get FREE mosquito-eating fish (*Gambusia affinis*) if you have sources that cannot be drained (e.g. fish ponds, pools, large horse troughs).
- * Make sure your sprinklers are set in a manner that will allow the ground to dry completely before the next cycle. Conserve water and prevent mosquito breeding.
- * Wear long sleeved shirts and pants and use mosquito repellents containing DEET, Picaridin, Oil of Lemon Eucalyptus, or IR3535 when outdoors during dusk and dawn. Always follow instructions on the product label.
- * Keep tight fitting screens on doors and windows to prevent mosquitoes from entering homes.
- * Horse owners should make sure their horses are properly vaccinated.
- * Report stagnant pools and other backyard sources to the AVMVCD.

The public is asked to help with West Nile Virus surveillance and control efforts by reporting dead birds by calling 1-877-WNV-BIRD (877-968-2473) or online at www.westnile.ca.gov. Birds that are not picked up by the end of the day can be safely discarded in the trashcan using gloves, a shovel or an inverted trash bag to handle them.

For any further questions or services please feel free to contact the Antelope Valley Mosquito & Vector Control District by phone (661-942-2917) or check us out online at www.avmosquito.org.